

## **Debenham Roundabout Pre-school.**

In October I took over from Gina Helm as Pre-school Chair-person, we had quite a change in committee with parents of older children moving on and many 'new parents' joining so, throughout the Autumn term we all had to help each other out with finding our feet and our new roles. We now are working well as a team and this can be seen in some of our projects and events.

In pre-school Fiona Norris the Manager is working with the staff towards the 'ECAT' standard. This stands for 'Every Child a Talker'. The Pre-school recently had a visit from Suffolk county council early years education dept. and the group have made good progress towards this standard and expect to achieve this in July. With this in place, funding is now available for the group to access and used on teaching aids and equipment to encourage all children to communicate from an early age.

The new school intake is set to start in September 2011, which has had a knock on effect on the group, in terms of numbers of children attending and funded 3 year old spaces. In preparation for this we have lowered our start age to 2 years old. This has been very popular with parents who want to gradually build up their sessions for children and has increased our numbers over the previous and current term. We have also created a strong link with the High Suffolk Children Centre to get funding for some 2 years olds in certain circumstances. We feel this is a real benefit to the group as we can use each others facilities to help serve the community. We will now be re-assessing the situation in September to see how the Pre-school works with the new changes and how we can improve over the next year.

We have had a good year so far with fundraising, in March we held our annual duck race, unfortunately we could not use the river as intended but the fire service and a large sheet of plastic made the day and the race was held on the School Field and raised £700. We also had many events at Christmas time which helped towards the fundraising and we are due to hold a Barn Dance in September boost our funds again.

One area we have had to look in to is marketing the group to parents outside the village. Again we do use the Children Centre where possible to reach to parents outside of Debenham, but as all of the committee live in Debenham it is often difficult to come up with ideas that are free!!! If anyone has any ideas please feel free to contact Fiona or I as it would be of great help.